



the family values toolkit

For Children Ages 5 to 7

This Month's Featured Value Is: **Cooperation**

Cooperation means working with others in harmony to achieve a goal, forming a team committed to finding solutions to any interpersonal conflicts that may arise along the way. It also means being ready to lend a hand by willingly following rules that benefit the greater group.



What Can Parents Do to Nurture This Important Value?

First, Set Goals:

Get kids to internalize the steps of problem-solving and understand that unless they cooperate, there will be no game or finished project.

At elementary-school age, children have more control over their impulses. If they're told not to touch something, they can often rein in their curiosity. They respect authority, and they typically accept household and classroom rules. A six-year-old who is being picked up from a playdate may whine, but he's likely to understand that it's almost dinnertime, and he'll get ready to go.

During this stage, parents can really begin to foster cooperation in their children. It's a great time to get them learning the benefits of working together and teach them new ways to solve disputes.

Next, Take Action! Try These Activities:

- ✓ **Share a "family style" dinner**, such as at a Chinese restaurant, and point out how sharing different dishes means everyone can enjoy the meal more.
- ✓ **Create a list of family rules for cooperation**, for example, "We don't interrupt each other when we're speaking," and explain the reasoning behind each rule.
- ✓ **Run a three-legged race**. This classic game teaches cooperation fast! Divide kids into pairs. Each pair should tie their inside legs together with a couple of scarves. Have a race with other friends or families. The tied-together pair will need to cooperate to be able to move quickly.
- ✓ **Play "Applause."** This variation on "getting warmer, getting colder" has one person leaving the room while the rest of the group hides an object decided upon in advance. When the person comes back in, the group claps louder or softer (or not at all) depending on how close the person gets to finding the hidden object.

Then, Report Back!

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